PADM 689: Capstone
Spring 2024

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Course Description

This course is the culmination of the SPA masters' program coursework. The purpose of the course is for students to demonstrate that they have acquired the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of graduates of the SPA programs. To do so, students will apply what they have learned to real issues in public and nonprofit organizations by completing a team project. In completing the project, students are expected to utilize the principles of management theory and organizational behavior, a full array of research procedures, methods, and techniques, and employ them in administering human, budgetary, and financial resources for effective and efficient outcomes in public and nonprofit programs. Students will also demonstrate competence in oral and written communication. In addition, this course will look at public programs from a conceptual and analytical point of view and review key concepts for understanding and assessing public value and public organizations.

Graduates of public administration programs should be prepared to lead and manage in public and nonprofit programs. All programs, however well run, have the possibility of improving their processes, operations, and service delivery. The goal of the SPA is to assure that its graduates are capable of analyzing opportunities for improvement, recognizing the causes of underlying ineffectiveness, and identifying sound, evidence-based options for addressing them in practical settings. To do so, graduates will need to be able to think, plan, and direct public entities strategically. In addition, they must be able to apply the principles of management theory and organizational behavior to public and nonprofit organizations. Likewise, graduates must be able to collaborate in teams and groups, put their observations into clear, concise, and useful written form, and communicate these to their colleagues, co-workers, and clients. The ability to interact effectively with others will have a substantial effect on the ultimate ability of students to bring what they have learned in their graduate program to the workplace to improve it.

Course Objectives

To carry out the purpose above, the Capstone course has five learning objectives. The classroom, individual, group, and field work in the class are aimed at accomplishing these objectives. By completing this course successfully, students will show that they are proficient in the knowledge, skills, and abilities imparted by their master's program in public administration and will be able to:

1. Understand the context and problems of a program or organization
2. Analyze information to define and evaluate problems
3. Leverage data and published evidence to develop informed recommendations
4. Demonstrate competence in written and spoken communication
5. Present results to the audience in the most appropriate manner

TECHNICAL SKILLS

In order to participate and succeed in this class, you will need to be able to perform the following basic technical tasks:

- Use Canvas (help documentation located in "Help">" UNM Canvas Help Site" link on left course menu, and at [Online Student Documentation](#)).
- Use email – including attaching files, opening files, downloading attachments
- Copy and paste within applications including Microsoft Office
- Open a hyperlink (click on a hyperlink to get to a website or online resource)
- Use Microsoft Office applications
  - Create, download, update, save and upload MS Word documents
  - Create, download, update, save and upload MS PowerPoint presentations
  - Create, download, update, save and upload MS Excel spreadsheets
  - Download, annotate, save and upload PDF files
- Use the in-course web conferencing tool (Zoom)
- Download and install an application or plug in – required for participating in web conferencing sessions

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Computer
- A high speed Internet connection is highly recommended.
- Supported browsers include: [Detailed Supported Browsers and Operating Systems](#)
- Any computer capable of running a recently updated web browser should be sufficient to access your online course. However, bear in mind that processor speed, amount of RAM and Internet connection speed can **greatly** affect performance. Many locations offer free high-speed Internet access including [UNM's Computer Pods](#).
- Microsoft Office products are available free for all UNM students (more information on the [UNM IT Software Distribution and Downloads page](#))

For UNM Canvas Technical Support: (505) 277-0857 (24/7) or visit the [Canvas Info Site](#)

Canvas outages: Unexpected Canvas system outages are rare but, if they occur, I will advise everyone on how to proceed.

Tracking Course Activity
Canvas automatically records all students' activities including: your first and last access to the course, the pages you have accessed, the number of discussion messages you have read and sent, web conferencing, discussion text, and posted discussion topics. This data can be accessed by the instructor to evaluate class participation and to identify students having difficulty

COURSEWORK AND PARTICIPATION

Instructor Response Time

The instructors routinely check the course for postings or messages. Students can anticipate a response within the next business day. Feedback on assignments will typically be provided one week after submission.

Assignments

There will be no tests. Students' grades are comprised of a mix of points earned on individual and team assignments. Each assignment will be fully explained during class and in instructions posted online for that assignment. Assignments will be completed in the order indicated on the course schedule. If students submit assignments after they are due they should expect a deduction of points per day late. All assignments are to be submitted via the assignment portal of the course site. If you have a difficulty submitting assignments, please reach out to UNM's Canvas Support immediately and notify your instructor as well.

As indicated above, the purpose of the course is for students to demonstrate proficiency in and integrate what has been learned in their coursework. The team project is the main opportunity for students to do so by conducting research/analysis and applying what they have learned to solve an organization's problem. Teams and projects will be assigned by the instructors. This will be a course-long project and will require sustained effort, focus, and project management.

Time will be given in class for team meetings, but it is also expected that teams will meet regularly outside of class and will divide labor to conduct all necessary research and analysis. Team members will be able to communicate asynchronously using course messaging and synchronously using the chat, discussion, and other conferencing tools and software built into the course site. It is recommended that teams collaborate on the site and post work there. Brief explanations of each course assignment follow:

1. **Team Assignments (65 points total)**
   - **Draft Report Chapters/Sections** (5 points each – 25 points total)
     - Organization and Topic Introduction
     - Project Approach
     - Research and Analysis Summary
     - Preliminary Recommendation Outline
     - Recommendation Summary

   - **Preliminary and Final Presentations** (20 points total)
     Each team will present preliminary findings and recommendations to the client. This will accomplish two things: it provides an opportunity for teams to receive feedback from the client before submitting their final report and demonstrate their mastery of communication, collaboration, and presentation skills and techniques. Each team will also present a project update and facilitate a discussion with the class. Points may be deducted from individual scores for poor presentation skills.

   - **Final Written Report** (20 points)
     Teams will prepare and submit a written report that details the research/analysis completed as well as recommendations for the client organization. This report will include details of the team's strategies, efforts, problem identification, field work,

findings, and recommendations, among other things. Feedback will be provided on individual chapters of the report before the final report is due.

2. **Individual Assignments (35 points total)**
   o **Attendance** (10 points)
   Participation by attendance at scheduled classes is required as well as contribution to class discussions. Attendance will be taken at class sessions and those arriving after it is taken will be marked absent. Although the courtesy is appreciated, notification to the instructor of absence will not excuse an absence. A course member missing more than two (2) scheduled class meetings will lose one point per class in the course total and may be dropped from the course if the instructor deems the absences an impediment to successful completion of the course.

   o **Contribution to Team** (5 points each - 15 points total)
   Each student is expected to participate fully in team activities and the team project. Students will evaluate one another's team participation after three key assignments. In cases where team members are not participating sufficiently to guarantee the team's success and the student's success, the instructor may elect to drop them from the course.

   o **Individual Writing Skills** (10 points)
   Each student's writing skills and understanding of the course content will be evaluated based on the submission of the Organization and Topic Introduction Draft and Consideration of Public Values assignments.

Netiquette
Students taking the course through the Synchronous On-line modality (Distance Education using the Zoom software platform) have some additional requirements that they must fulfill to receive full credit in the course. These expectations are due to the nature of distance education through a distributed format that relies on internet-based virtual presence rather than physical attendance. Students that do not meet these expectations may be dropped from the class. These expectations include:
- Working Digital Equipment – Distance students must have access to a computer with access to the internet and a working camera and microphone. The available internet bandwidth must be robust and reliable enough to support both simultaneous voice and video in Zoom. For attendance purposes, distance students must be connected to the internet with the computer's ***camera on for the entire session***. Students not visible to the instructor or not responding when called upon will not be considered to be in attendance.
- Appropriate Location – Distance students must find a suitable and quiet location that is free of noise and interruption when attending class. This location may be in an office or domicile, but other business or engagement may not be conducted during the class session. It is expected that distance students will devote their attention to class while it is in session.
- Appropriate Dress – Distance students should remember that they will be visible to the instructor and other students during the class session. So, they should take care to dress appropriately. Formal or business wear is not required, but lounge or bed wear is discouraged.

- Other Activities – Distance students should behave as if they were in the classroom. So, they should not engage in activities that do not take place in the classroom setting. They should be attentive, ask questions, and participate

GRADING PROCEDURES

This is a graded course and students will receive letter grades indicating their performance in the course. Points earned for completing the course assignments outlined above are the basis for the assignment of individual course grades. The value of each requirement has been detailed above and is repeated below. Also, a grading scale that shows the grades earned for levels of accumulated points is presented below.

Assignment Points Possible

Assignment	Points Possible
Organization and Topic Introduction Draft	5
Project Approach	5
Organization and Topic Introduction	5
Consideration of Public Service Values	5
Research and Analysis Summary	5
Preliminary Recommendation Outline	5
Recommendation Summary	5
Team Presentation of Progress	5
Team Presentation of Preliminary Findings	5
Team Presentation of Recommendations	10
Team Final Written Report	20
Contribution to Team	15
Attendance	10

Grading Scale

Final grades will be based on the sum of all possible course points as noted above.

Points Earned	Grade
90 -100	A
80 -89	B
70 -79	C
60 -69	D
< 60	F

UNM POLICIES

Title IX: Gender Discrimination

In an effort to meet obligations under Title IX, UNM faculty, Teaching Assistants, and Graduate Assistants are considered "responsible employees" by the Department of Education (see pg. 15). This designation requires that any report of gender discrimination which includes sexual harassment, sexual misconduct and sexual violence made to a faculty member, TA, or GA must be reported to the Title IX Coordinator at the Office of Equal Opportunity.
Read more about campus policy regarding sexual misconduct.

COPYRIGHT ISSUES

All materials in this course fall under copyright laws and should not be downloaded, distributed, or used by students for any purpose outside this course.

The UNM Copyright Guide has additional helpful information on this topic.

Accessibility

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodations of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring accommodation, please contact the UNM Accessibility Resource Center in 2021 Mesa Vista Hall at 505-277-3506. Information about your disability is confidential.

- Blackboard's Accessibility statement
- Microsoft's Accessibility statement
- *Include links to accessibility statements for all other technologies included in the course.*

Academic Misconduct

You should be familiar with UNM's Policy on Academic Dishonesty and the Student Code of Conduct which outline academic misconduct defined as plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, or facilitating any such act.

Drop Policy

This course falls under all UNM policies for last day to drop courses, etc. Please see the UNM Course Catalog for information on UNM services and policies. Please see the UNM academic calendar for course dates, the last day to drop courses without penalty, and for financial disenrollment dates.

Virtual Meeting Recordings and Guest Participant Policy:

Technology will be used for virtual meetings in this course and our use of such technology is governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), the UNM Acceptable Computer Use Policy, UNM Computer Use Guidelines, and UNM's Student Code of Conduct. Sharing Electronic video and/or audio recording of the class with participants outside of the class is not permitted without written consent of the instructor and each participating student individually. The form to obtain written consent is available at https://registrar.unm.edu/forms/ferpa-consent.pdf. If a student in the course is uncomfortable with completing the FERPA consent waiver, then the student should talk with their advisor or instructor to determine whether successful participation in the class is still possible, or whether another course will meet the student's degree requirements.

If permission for electronic video and/or audio recording is granted, any distribution of the recording is prohibited. You may not share class recordings with anyone outside of this course and doing so may result in disciplinary action. Students with specific electronic recording accommodations authorized by the University of New Mexico Accessibility Resources Center do

not require instructor permission; however, the instructor must be notified of any such accommodation prior to recording. A record of all meetings and recordings is kept and stored by UNM, in accordance with these policies. Guest instructors and other participants may also attend our class meetings. Your instructor will not share course access in relation to class activities outside of the course participants, which include your fellow students, TAs/GAs, and any guest instructors, guest students, or community-based learning partners that we may engage with to achieve the stated course objectives. The only guest participants that will attend select course session are from organizations for which projects are being completed.

UNM RESOURCES

CAPS Tutoring Services

CAPS is a free-of-charge educational assistance program available to UNM students enrolled in classes. Online services include the Online Writing Lab, Chatting with or asking a question of a Tutor.

UNM Libraries

Student Health & Counseling (SHAC) Online Services

FOR MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS

There are resources on campus designed to help you succeed. You can approach any faculty or staff for help with any issues you may encounter. Many faculty and staff have completed the GREEN ZONE training to learn about the unique challenges facing military-connected students. If you feel that you need help beyond what faculty and/or staff can give you, please reach out to the Veterans Resource Center on campus at 505-277-3181, or by email at vrc@unm.edu.

COURSE SCHEDULE

	Date	Activity	Assignments
1.	1/17	**Introduction to the Course and Projects** - Talk: Course Intro and Expectations - Talk: Project Introduction - Talk: Understanding the Organization and Topic (part 1) - Assignment Instructions: Project Ranking	Project Ranking (Individual Assignment) Due 1/19
2.	1/24	**Working in Teams** - Talk: Understanding the Organization and Topic (part 2) - Talk: Team Assignments and Expectations - Assignment Instructions: Organization and Topic Intro - Assignment Instructions: Consideration of Public Service Values	
3.	1/31	**Scoping a Project** - Talk: Elements of Scope - Assignment Instructions: Project Approach	Organization and Topic Intro Draft (Individual Assignment) Due Consideration of Public Service Values (Individual Assignment) Due
4.	2/7	**Finalizing the Project Scope** - Client Meetings - Class Discussion: Presentation Debrief - Assignment Instructions: Team Evaluation #1 - Assignment Feedback: Consideration of Public Values - Assignment Feedback: Organization and Topic Intro	Project Approach (Team Assignment) Due
5.	2/14	**Research and Analysis** - Assignment Instructions: Research/Analysis Deliverable - Assignment Feedback: Project Approach	Organization and Topic Intro (Team Assignment) Due Team Evaluation #1 (Individual Assignment) Due
6.	2/21	**Soliciting Input** - Talk: Running Meetings and Facilitating Conversations - Assignment Instructions: Team Progress Presentations - Assignment Instructions: Project Update Presentation - Assignment Feedback: Organization and Topic Intro	
7.	2/28	**Team Presentations** - Team Progress Presentations and Discussion	Project Update Presentation (Team Assignment) Due

	Date	Activity	Assignments
8.	3/6	**Developing Recommendations** -Talk: Sharing Preliminary Findings -Talk: Tailoring Recommendations - Assignment Instructions: Preliminary Findings Presentation - Assignment Instructions: Preliminary Recommendation Outline - Assignment Instructions: Midcourse Evaluation	
9.	3/13	**NO CLASS MEETING – SPRING BREAK**	
10.	3/20	**Presenting Preliminary Findings** - Client Meetings - Class Discussion: Presentation Debrief - Assignment Instructions: Team Evaluation #2	Research/Analysis Summary (Team Assignment) Due Preliminary Findings Presentation (Team Assignment) Due Midcourse Evaluation (Individual Assignment) Due
11.	**3/27**	**Team Working Session** - Assignment Feedback: Client Update Presentation - Assignment Feedback: Research/Analysis Summary	Team Evaluation #2 (Individual Assignment) Due
12.	4/3	**Team Working Session** - Assignment Instructions: Presentation of Recommendations	Preliminary Recommendation Outline (Team Assignment) Due
13.	4/10	**Team Working Session** - Assignment Instructions: Recommendation Summary - Assignment Feedback: Preliminary Recommendation Outline	
14.	4/17	**Presenting Recommendations** - Client Meetings - Class Discussion: Presentation Debrief	Presentation of Recommendations (Team Assignment) Due
15.	4/24	**Team Working Session** - Assignment Instructions: Final Report	Recommendation Summary (Team Assignment) Due
16.	5/1	**Team Working Session** - Assignment Feedback: Recommendation Deliverable - Assignment Instructions: Team Evaluation #3	
17.	5/8	**NO CLASS MEETING**	Final Report (Team Assignment) Due Team Evaluation #3 (Individual Assignment) Due